

Submissions to THEATRE ORGAN: A Writer's Guide

[General Instructions](#)

[Department Deadlines](#)

[Photo Requirements](#)

[Chapter News](#)

[Vox Pops](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[Formatting](#)

[Standard usage](#)

This Guide is intended as a reference tool for you. It is not a comprehensive style guide, nor does it attempt to teach you how to write a good article. We understand that most of the material submitted to us is not prepared by professional writers, and we are here to help you turn your submission into an article that ATOS members and others will enjoy reading.

By observing the standards and guidelines in this Guide, you will help us to help you. The less time we have to spend on “cleanup,” the more time we can spend helping you to fine-tune your submission.

We thank you in advance for your cooperation—and your continued submissions.

—Don Feely and Mike Bryant
Co-editors
editor@atos.org

General Instructions

Please contact the editors of THEATRE ORGAN (Mike Bryant or Don Feely by e-mail at editor@atos.org, or by phone) to discuss length and content of manuscripts you wish to submit. Phone numbers are listed on the ATOS website at <http://www.atos.org/about/board-staff/directory>.

Please submit all material to the correct e-mail address:

Chapter News: chapternews@atos.org

Advertising-related issues: adsales@atos.org

All other Journal submissions: editor@atos.org

Articles longer than 750 words (approximately a page and a half) **MUST** be submitted as Microsoft Word or Works documents, sent as an e-mail attachment. For shorter articles, including Chapter News and Vox Pops, the preferred formats for text documents are, in this order: Microsoft Word or Works documents attached to an e-mail, or plain text, which may be either an attached file or in an e-mail. We will only accept electronic submissions; “hard copy” documents will not be accepted.

Please do not use PDF files for submissions, or embed photographs in the document.

Department Deadlines

The parenthetical example dates shown are based on a September/October issue. For example, if we say “15th of the third month prior to cover date (June 15)” we mean “for the September/October issue, the deadline is June 15.”

- AD COPY: First of the month prior to cover date (August 1). (No change)
- AROUND THE CIRCUIT (Print): 20th of the second month prior to cover date (July 20), to include events submitted up through the 10th of the month. (No change)
- CHAPTER NEWS: First of the second month prior to cover date (July 1). (No change)
- CLOSING CHORD: As appropriate. We’ll print it as soon as we can.
- FEATURE ARTICLES: 15th of the fourth month prior to publication (May 15). Please note this reminder—feature articles submitted without pictures are not likely to be printed. Here’s what we absolutely must have by that deadline:
 - The finished text. We’ll work with you to refine it if and as needed over the following month. Bear in mind that at the same time, we are working on getting another issue out. There will be times we’ll have to set your article aside. It is rare that we receive a first draft that doesn’t undergo quite a bit of revision before publication. We can’t receive the first draft of an article on July 15 and do a first-rate job on it in time for the September/October issue.
 - The pictures and other illustrations you want to include, including captions and permission to reproduce if you are not the copyright holder. We encourage you to submit more pictures than you think we’ll use so we have a good selection available
- LETTERS TO EDITOR: First of the month prior to cover date (August 1)
- NEW MEMBERS LIST: 20th of the second month prior to cover date (July 20)
- NEWS and NOTES ANNOUNCEMENTS: First of the second month prior to cover date (July 1)
- RECURRING FEATURES (reviews, regular columns): 15th of the second month prior to cover date (July 15)
- VOX POPS: 15th of the third month prior to cover date (June 15)

We hate to take a hard line, but the deadlines are the deadlines. There is no later “drop-dead” date. If you know in advance you can’t meet a deadline for any reason, it is your responsibility

to work it out with us beforehand. We'll always do our best to accommodate special circumstances, but you can't just spring it on us. If you miss a deadline and didn't communicate with us in advance, your piece will not run.

Naming files

- Due to limitations of the FTP site (the way files are transmitted for production), file names **MUST NOT** contain any spaces. Please use the following formats:
 - For feature articles, name the file with an abbreviated version of the article name or subject. Example: The Word document for “The Seattle Liberty Wurlitzer, Part 2” might be named SeaLiberty2.doc.
 - For obituaries, name the file with the last name of the deceased, followed by an underscore and “obit.” Example
 - Wright_obit.doc
 - Hazleton_obit.doc
 - For Chapter News items, use the chapter name, abbreviated if appropriate, an underscore, then the issue (abbreviated as shown in the list below) in which the item is to run, **NOT** the time period the item covers. Examples:
 - Correct: Atlanta_JanFeb.doc, RMCATOS_MarApr.doc, ValleySun_JulyAug.doc
 - Incorrect: Atlanta Jan Feb.doc, Rocky Mountain.doc
 - The issue abbreviations are:
 - JanFeb
 - MarApr
 - MayJune
 - JulyAug
 - SeptOct
 - NovDec
- Photos accompanying submissions must use the same name as the text file, but with a sequential number following the filename, as shown in these examples:
 - SeaLiberty2_1.jpg, Atlanta_2.jpg
- Do not use the photo caption as the file name. If you need assistance in renaming files, contact the editors.

Photo Requirements

- All photos must be clear, in focus, and have good contrast (dark photos will not print well).

- Photos must be a minimum resolution of 300 dpi; minimum acceptable size for publication is three inches by two inches (900 x 600).
- Photos must not use decorative formatting, such as borders, matting effects, soft-focus edges, etc.
- Photos must not have date and timestamp information in the image area.
- Preferred method for sending photos is as jpeg ATTACHMENTS to e-mail. Photos embedded in a document or an e-mail cannot be used.
- Attachments in excess of 10mb cannot be received by the editors' e-mail systems. If you have photographs in TIFF format, which can easily exceed that limit, you will either need to convert them to JPEG format, or contact the editors for alternatives.
- If you do not have a scanner, but need to send us a scanned photograph or other illustration, shops such as FedEx Office have computers with scanners available for use at a very reasonable cost. Save the scan (as JPG format) to a flash drive, and attach the file(s) to your e-mail. Scan at the highest resolution the scanner offers, but in no case lower than 300dpi.
- All photos must have a caption and photographer credit. If the name of the photographer is unknown, the credit would be "xxx Collection," where "xxx" is the name of the individual or entity who owns the photos.
- Make captions as brief as possible—tell the story in the article.
- List the captions and photographer credits at the end of the text document using the format shown. If there are a large number of photographs, you may place the captions and credits in a separate document (NOT in an e-mail). Format and examples:
 - Filename: Caption (Photographer)
 - Norcal_1.jpg: Oliver Organist at Berkeley (Photo by Sam Shutterbug)
 - OCATOS_2.jpg: Oaks Park Wurlitzer (Oaks Park Collection)
- For photographs obtained from the internet, some additional care must be taken to ensure we comply with copyright limitations. Please contact the editors for additional requirements.

Chapter News

- Deadline for receipt of Chapter News is the FIRST of every ODD-numbered month (January, March, May, July, September, and November), for publication in the NEXT issue. For example, January 1 is the deadline for inclusion in the March-April issue.
- Submissions received after the deadline will not be published.
- E-mail your Chapter News items to chapternews@atos.org
- Maximum length: 300 words of text.
 - Only text between your principal city and the correspondent's name are counted.

- Chapter News must be a single narrative. We cannot accommodate subheadings or bylines in the body of the text
 - If multiple people contributed to the report, they should be credited on the last line of the piece in the format “(name [and] name contributed to this article.)” This does not count against the 300-word limit.
- We recommend that you do not submit text that has already appeared, or will appear, in your chapter newsletter, but instead provide fresh coverage for the Journal—even if the events being covered are the same.
- If your chapter has something special to tell us that would take more than 300 words, consider writing a separate article; contact the editor to discuss.
- Text may be edited for space and clarity.
 - If your submission is between 300 and 350 words, we will edit for length. If it is over 350 words, we will return it to you for revision, and you will have a very short window to trim and return it.
- Chapter News must include:
 - Chapter name
 - Principal city and state/province of operation
 - Name of correspondent
 - Name, telephone number, and e-mail address of chapter president or chairman
- Chapter News may not include music titles played at programs, menu items served at chapter functions, or announcements of merchandise for sale.
- Do not include announcements of future events that will take place before the issue will be mailed. (Submit it instead to the Around the Circuit database on the ATOS website.) For example, the deadline for the July-August issue is May 1. The issue will be mailed during the last week of June. An event scheduled for June 15 should not be included.
- Preferred formats for Chapter News are, in this order: Microsoft Word or Works documents attached to an e-mail, plain text either in an attached file or entered directly in an e-mail. “Hard copy” submissions will not be accepted.
- Photos: No more than two photos (see [Photos](#) section for requirements). Photos MUST include the caption and the photographer credit.
- Please remember that we receive between 20 and 30 Chapter News submissions for each issue. In order to minimize confusion and the potential for errors, it is essential that you name your text file as described in “Naming Files,” above.

Obituaries

- Obituaries should be limited to 300 words unless approval has been given in advance by the editors.
- One photograph should be included if possible. See the [Photo Requirements](#) section for standards.

- Obituaries submitted to THEATRE ORGAN must be original work; an obituary published elsewhere (newspaper, for example) must be accompanied by permission to reprint from both the original source and author.

Vox Pops

Items submitted for Vox Pops must follow the same formatting requirements as [Chapter News](#) items, although the limitations on number of photographs and word count do not apply.

- Vox Pops articles usually focus on people and events, and are not necessarily opinion pieces—although there is no prohibition against opinion pieces. Instruments and installations may be suitable for a Vox Pops piece if there is an event associated with the installation or instrument (such as a dedication of a “new” theatre organ installation). Articles too short to run as a full feature may appear in Vox Pops instead.
- Deadline for Vox Pops submission is the 15th of the third month prior to cover date (i.e., deadline for inclusion in the September/October issue is June 15).

Formatting for Word documents¹

- Do not use headers or footers.
- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt. Do not use bold or italics (except as indicated in [Standard Usage](#), below).
- Paragraph settings
 - Alignment – Left
 - Indentation – Left and Right both 0
 - Special – None
 - Spacing – Before and After both 0
 - Line Spacing – Single
- Margins: at least one inch on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Single space the document, with a double space between paragraphs.
- Do not indent the beginning of each paragraph.
- Following the punctuation at the end of a sentence, leave one space (not two).
- Rather than using a hyphen or a double hyphen surrounded by spaces, please use an em dash (an em dash is created in Word with the key combination <CTRL><ALT>- [the dash on the number keypad]).
 - Correct: “Separate a thought—like this—using em dashes with no spaces.”
 - Incorrect: “Separate a thought – like this.”
- Do not incorporate graphics in the document, or use a “letterhead” format.

¹ The editors have a macro available for Word 97 and later versions that will set the formatting, including closing up inter-sentence spacing and ensuring that periods and commas are inside the quotation marks, not outside. If you would like to have the macro, contact the editors.

- Formatting for stop lists and chamber analysis: please contact the editor IN ADVANCE for a correctly formatted sample document

Standard Usage

THEATRE ORGAN follows the Chicago Manual of Style, with some exceptions and extensions. We recognize that contributors may not be familiar with CMOS. This section covers our major style standards, including those which are exceptions to CMOS.

The following are THEATRE ORGAN style standards:

- Time 12-hour format, am or pm. Minutes are always included.
 - Correct: 10:00am, 8:15pm (note no spaces between minutes and am or pm)
 - Incorrect: a.m., p.m, A.M., or P.M.
 - Incorrect: 9am, 8 pm
- ATOS—no periods or spaces; do not precede with “the”
- Dates—June 1, June 2, June 3, June 4—not 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th.
- Numbers 1 through 9—spell out in text; 10 and up—use figures, except at the beginning of a sentence or immediately preceding another number; use commas for numbers 1,000 and greater.
 - There is some flexibility in describing organs, however. For example, an original Style 260 Wurlitzer could be described in any one of these ways:
 - three-manual, fifteen-rank Wurlitzer
 - 3-manual, 15-rank Wurlitzer
 - 3/15 Wurlitzer
- Quotation marks—periods and commas are always inside the quotation marks; semicolons are outside; placement of exclamation points and question marks depends on the sense of the quotation.
- Serial commas—in a list of three or more items, a comma should be used before the final item. Example: “The dinner included soup, salad, entrée, and dessert.”
- Hyphenating compound modifiers
 - Clarity and readability are the objectives. Unless a hyphen is necessary to eliminate ambiguity, it may be omitted. Here are some examples:
 - “...would you like a regular or super size soda?” Textbook grammar would be “...a regular- or super-size soda,” but since it is clear in context that the noun being modified is “soda,” the hyphen following “regular” may be omitted.

- "...presented a first-class performance." Here, the hyphen is necessary to establish that "first-class" modifies "performance." Otherwise, it might be interpreted as the first performance of a class.
- Book, show and movie titles—in italics; also titles of major musical works. A "major" musical work may have several movements or parts, whether or not the individual parts are titled separately, or it may be of such length that it would not be considered simply "a song." Examples: Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*; Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*; Copland's *Rodeo Suite*.
- Song titles—in quotation marks (except as noted for major works)
- Name of an event—in italics (*Party on the Pipes*; *Wurlitzer Weekend*; etc.)
- Addresses and states
 - Spell out names of states or provinces (California, NOT Calif. or CA)
 - Spell out street suffixes, and capitalize (Avenue, Street, North, South, etc.)
- Telephone numbers—for numbers with a country code of "1" (USA, Canada, many Caribbean countries), format the number as 999-123-4567, not (999) 123-4567 or 1-999-123-4567.

Numbers with a country code other than "1" should be formatted with the full country and city codes, using the local standard without hyphens. Example: (UK) +44 1234 567890; (Australia) +61 2 1234 5678.

Remember that toll-free (Freecall, Freephone) numbers are usually accessible only within the same country code. If you include a toll-free number, also include a regular number.

- President, vice president, etc., are capitalized only at the beginning of a sentence or when they are associated with the office-holder's name:
 - Example – XYZ chapter President John Smith, or John Smith, President.
 - Example – nominees for president of XYZ chapter...
- When referring to a specific body, it will be capitalized if the usage is formal (i.e., if the entire name is spelled out), and not if the usage is informal
 - Formal example – ...the Board of Directors of XYZ chapter...
 - Informal example – ...the board met on June 1...
- When to capitalize "Chapter"
 - If "chapter" is used as a common noun, it is not capitalized.
 - Example - ...the chapter's annual summer picnic...
 - If the full official name of the organization includes the word "chapter," it is capitalized:
 - Example - ...the members of XYZ Chapter held their annual...

- Example - ...the West Overshoe Theatre Organ Society, an ATOS chapter since... (“chapter” is not part of the Society’s name)
- Direction versus location:
 - Points of the compass are not capitalized if they indicate a direction...
 - Go west on Third Avenue, then turn south on Oak Street.
 - ...but they are capitalized if they indicate a location:
 - ...Western Pennsylvania
 - ...Eastern Maine
 - ...the Upper East Side of Manhattan
- Conventions for person’s names
 - The first time a name is used, the first and last names will be used
 - For subsequent insertions, either the first name alone or the last name coupled with an appropriate form of address will be used (Mr., Dr., Ms., Miss, etc.). The choice of first or last name will usually be the author’s, and will normally depend on the degree of formality of the context.
- Abbreviations:
 - Horsepower—15-hp blower
 - Revolutions per minute—rpm
- Organs:
 - Möller—NOT Moller or Moeller (to generate ö, press <ALT>0246 on the numeric keypad, or <CTRL><SHIFT><COLON>, then the letter o)
 - Æolian, not Aeolian (on a PC, <ALT>0198 generates Æ)
 - Robert-Morton—NOT Robert Morton
 - Wurlitzer—NOT WurliTzer or Wurli
 - Composite—Wurlitzer/Kimball composite, not Wurliball or Kimbitzer; Wurlitzer/Robert-Morton composite, not WurliMorton
 - Opus 3367—NOT Opus No. 3367, or Opus #3367
 - Kimballs do not have opus numbers. Use KPO nnnn (for “Kimball Pipe Organ”) instead.
 - Not every Wurlitzer is “Mighty,” nor did any other builder refer to their instruments as “mighty.”
- Organ stops, ranks, and chambers
 - When referring to a stop or a specific rank, capitalize the initial letter:
 - Tibia Clausa, Solo String, Clarinet
 - When referring to a family of tone, do not capitalize:

- strings, reeds, flutes, diapasons.
 - When referring to combinations, if one element is capitalized, then all elements must be Examples:
 - ...a String/Vox combination... (even though the “string” element may be any of several different ranks, since “Vox” is capitalized, so must “String” be.)
 - ...accompaniment of untremmed flutes and diapasons
 - ...a single-note melody on the Clarinet, accompanied by the Concert Flute and the organ’s softest strings, the Gamba and Celeste
- Word usage:
 - Open and closed compounds
 - Many compound terms evolve over time from open (“on line”) through hyphenated (“on-line”) to closed (“online”) forms. We prefer the closed form in most cases, unless another form provides better clarity or a clue as to proper pronunciation. Example: “Re-creation” and “Recreation.”
 - Some exceptions do exist. Here’s a partial list:
 - “e-mail,” not “email”
 - sing-along
 - Post Horn
 - Through—NOT thru
 - Fundraising—NOT fund-raising
 - “Theatre” is the standard spelling in our publication. However, when used as a proper noun, the spelling should match the name of the business or venue (i.e., *Paramount Theatre* in Denver, *Paramount Theater* in Charlottesville, Virginia; *Fox Theatre* in St. Louis, *Fox Theater* in Oakland).
 - “Theatre” refers to a genre, but may also refer to a building;
 - “Theater” refers to a building only
 - Localization:
 - Although ATOS and THEATRE ORGAN are US-based, we have many very active members and readers in other countries. For submissions from authors or correspondents outside the US, we will retain the idiomatic expressions, grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules of the country of origin. For example, if a Chapter News item from the UK references “Mr Jones,” it will not be changed to “Mr. Jones” for publication.
 - Please avoid slang or idiomatic expressions that may not be generally understood outside your local area. For example, an American reader would probably not know that a “zebra crossing” has nothing to do with striped animals, nor is a UK reader likely to readily grasp the meaning of “toad

strangler” (an extremely heavy downpour of rain). And nobody outside Australia is likely to know what a bowser is.

- Publication names
 - Acceptable forms for this publication:
 - THEATRE ORGAN
 - *Theatre Organ, the Journal of the American Theatre Organ Society*
 - the Journal (if it is obvious that the term refers to THEATRE ORGAN)
 - When referring to a non-specific publication, “journal” would not be capitalized
 - Names of all other publications are in italics (i.e., *National Geographic*).
 - Capitalization of abbreviated or informal terms will follow the usage of the publisher
 - If the publisher of *Giddyup, the Digest of the American Buggy Whip Society* capitalizes “Digest” when referring informally to that publication, we will follow that standard.